

REMARKS:**I. Introduction**

In the Office Action mailed on August 2, 2006, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7 to 12, 22 and 26. The present amendment cancels no claims, amends claim 1, and adds no new claims. Accordingly, claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 to 12, 22, and 26 remain pending in this application.

III. Claim Rejections Based on 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7 to 12, 22 and 26 under 35. U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Chaban (5,738,475) in view of Arff (3,765,088). The Examiner stated in part that "Chaban does not disclose the specific fastener as described." The Examiner also stated that Arff has a first rotatable member (33), a second link (21), and a single piece fastener (59) having a head portion (61) located on the external surface of the first rotatable member. The Examiner further stated that "a distal end of the body portion is plastically deformed to form a bulge and a lip (67) engaging an external surface of the second link." Applicant disagrees with this because the Examiner says the second link is item 21 while in fact the lip (67) engages the other side plate (43) which is not movable relative to the first side plate. The Examiner concluded that "it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have substituted the fastener as taught by Arff for the fastener in Chaban, in order to have an oil-less, bushing-less, secure, yet rotatable fastener."

The rivet (59) disclosed by Arff has a very different structure than the fastener of the present invention and does not solve the problem which is solved by the fastener according to the present invention. The rivet (59) of Arff is a hollow rivet having a body section (61) with a head (63) at one end and an end portion or lip (67) at the other end. The head (63) engages the exterior surface of a first side plate (33) while the distal end (67) is deformed to engage a

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second side plate (43). Arff states that the "end portion (67) which is located at the other end of the body section (61) ... is deformed as shown in FIG. 3, into an annular area of engagement with the chamfered margin (57) so as to unify the side plate members (33, and 43) into a roller assembly which is rotatable relative to the tongue." Column 3, lines 48 to 54. Because the components are "unified", the side plates (33 and 43) and the rivet (59) are not free to rotate relative to one another. This rivet (59) was designed to prevent such relative movement. The head and lip lock the side plates (33 and 34), to which they engage, against rotation relative to one another. The tongue (29) is free to rotate relative to the side plates (33 and 34) but it is noted that the rivet (59) does not engage the fixed position tongue (21) in any way and thus has no effect on relative movement or sloppiness between the "unified" roller assembly (33, 43, and 59) and the tongue (21). The tongue (21) forms an outer race for a plurality of bearing elements or rollers (31). The first side plate (33) has a flange portion (39) which forms an inner race for the rollers (31). Thus it appears that sloppiness in this interface is controlled by high precision components forming the bearing assembly.

In contrast, the fastener of the present invention provides a solution to the problem of sloppiness or free play due to tolerance build up in the situation where two members held together by a fastener and are rotatable relative to one another. Once solution to this problem is produce higher tolerance parts. However, higher tolerance parts are more expensive and thus this solution is not desirable. The Applicant provided a desirable solution to this problem by providing a rivet having hollow bore and a lip plastically deformed so that the body portion of the fastener is outwardly expanded by plastic deformation into contact with both of the links within both of the apertures to eliminate any "sloppiness" or free play without preventing the relative rotation between the links. It was the inventive insight of the present invention to discover this low cost solution to the problem of lateral free play.

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With regard to relative rotation between the first and second links, the Examiner stated that "the first and second links, as taught by Chaban, are capable of performing such a function. Applicants agree that the links of Chaban are capable of performing such a function with the rivet of Chaban. However, the links of Chaban are not capable of performing such a function when connected by the rivet of Arff because the head and lip of Arff lock the members engaged by the head and lip together against relative movement. It is only the intermediary tongue that rotates relative to the others.

Independent claim 1, and claims dependent therefrom, are allowable because they each include the limitations of "a fastener having a head portion engaging the first external surface of the first link, a lip portion plastically deformed into engagement with the second external surface of the second link" and "whereby the fastener secures the first and second links to allow relative rotational movement between the first and second links while preventing relative linear motion therebetween in all directions perpendicular to a direction the fastener is extending through the first and second links." No prior art of record reasonably discloses or suggests the present invention as defined by claim 1. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

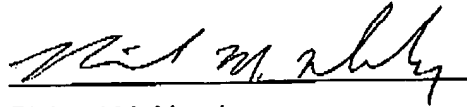
V. CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is found that the present amendment does not place the application in a condition for allowance, Applicant's undersigned attorney requests that the Examiner initiate a telephone interview to expedite prosecution of the application. If there are any fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-2326.

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Respectfully submitted,



Richard M. Mescher
Reg. No. 38,242

PORTER, WRIGHT, MORRIS & ARTHUR LLP
41 South High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 227-2026
Fax: (614) 227-2100

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CERTIFICATE OF TRANSMISSION BY FACSIMILE

I hereby certify that this Request for Continued Examination (RCE) Transmittal and Response are being filed by facsimile to 571-273-8300; Attention Group Art Unit 3632, Examiner Amy Jo Sterling on February 2, 2007.


Richard M. Mescher
Reg. No. 38,242

In the application:

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